SHAH-HAMDAN MOSQUE

Khanquah-i-Mualla

SRINAGAR, Kashmir.

INTRODUCTION

This is just to help a Foreigner-visitor who is not conversant with oriental languages, that the attendants of this Historical Mosque of Sayyid Shah Hamadan (May Allah be pleased with him) known as Khanquah-i-Moualla is publishing this Pamphlet so as to enable one to know the brief history of this holy place.

In this connection we are grateful to Jenab Tayubshah Sidiqi and Jenab Sad-ud-Din Tarabali both educationists and devotees of this religious cum-spiritual-centre who have been very much helpful in collecting and compiling the authentic historical data contained herein.

An important unique custom of religious tolerance prevalent in Kashmir alone in the whole of Indian Sub-Continent needs attention. You will find here that at many places of worship especially at this historical holy place both Hindus and Muslims have been offering prayers in their own manner for the last six hundred years without any hitch or hindrance. What a highly noble, marvellous and worthy sentiment of religious tolerance it is.

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KHANQUAH-I-MOUALLA

"LIVES have turning points" is a fact as true for individuals as for a people. Old order changes, giving place to new, but the hands of the clock of the time never stop to observe the change. They move on and on. The novelty of the change loses its attraction just as the new moon its charm.

Few events are retained in memory and innumerable ones are forgotten. One event follows another as the sequence of its cause and this phenomena is observable throughout the kingdom of Nature. The frosty winter is followed by the bright and fragrant spring which in its turn gives place to summer and so on, only to pass into the dark oblivion of the past. Yet there are events and occasions that people must keep alive. Time might lose its deteriorating effect for them but memory must hold them as fresh as possible inspite of its weakness. They transmit from generation to generation as important sacred and dearly loved trusts.

The ancient civilizations are traceable from such trusts and one looks with wonder to those monumental works which commemorate the standard of perfection the ancients reached. The pyramids of Egypt, the edifices raised by various ancient kings, Alhumbra and Abasofia, constructed in ancient and modern times give us a clue to the perfection of the architecture, the

glory of the then potentates and the social, economic, political and religious circumstances under which our ancestors lived.

Monuments are of different types—those erected by kings and monarchs of ancient times, to edify their pomp and show; those constructed to commemorate various arts—architecture, sculpture or culture of nations and those which commemorate religious functions and establishment of various creeds.

The last type of monuments have far-reaching and ever-lasting effects and everywhere on the surface of the earth such edifices show the grandeur and solemnity of the places of worship and the purity, religious-zeal, piety and devotion of the propounders of the movements connected with their name.

Kashmir a land of sages, rishis, saints and holy-men could not be an exception to this general rule. Great temples, pagodas, vihars, mosques and shrines were erected in this land of bliss in various ages ancient and modern both. Volumes have been written by various historians describing the glory of the great temples erected here in ancient times and Kalihana in his monumental work the Rajttrungni gives a vivid description of all of them, The present pamphlet intends to give a short description of one of the revered shrines of the modern times.

The Muslims of Kashmir who form the bulk of the population of this Earthly Paradise have a number of events and occasions which they hold in great reverence and respect. One of these is so important, so much remembered, and so much honoured that the

most ignorant of the populace esteems it more than anything else. It is a turning-point in the history of the land. To be brief, it is the first visit of a famous descendant of the Holy Prophet (be peace on him) to Kashmir for the propagation of Islam here. His arrival and the consequent conversion of thousands of the people of Kashmir to Islam, with only Divine help to succour him and spiritual superiority to sustain him which is a blow to those who maintain that Islam spread at the point of sword. He was no conqueror like Alexander or the like who could impose, with force, his creed upon those whom he conquered, but only a self-exile from his native land with a handful of his disciples and relations. With wonderful success he got numberless Kashmiris into the fold of Islam and in order to centralize their habits and activities in the new faith and to make the principles of Islam firmrooted in their minds the construction of a mosque was a strongly-felt need. The great Sayyid received inspiration from his ancestor the holy Prophet (may peace be on him), as the tradition goes and as Muslims of Kashmir ardently and strongly believe, to build a mosque where the temple of which the Chief-Keeper and his disciples and followers had embraced Islam, stood. It is generally believed that the Prophet marked the boundaries and the foundation of the proposed mosque. The foundation of the mosque was accordingly laid under the same injunctions.

The aim and object of this pamphlet is to satisfy the curiosity of the visitors of this mosque who come from far-off lands to see it but go away with a heavy heart in the absence of a short ready record of this rare piece of architecture and religious reve-

rence. This pamphlet as such, can only be expected to give a brief concise correct historical information of all the important events and occurences connected with the construction of this mosque and not a detailed history.

The place where to-day stands the splendid and magnificient Khan-Qahi-Moalla was first occupied by a temple. This temple erected by Raja Purwarsain of Malwa dynasty, who was a famous potentate of Kashmir in the second century of Christian Era, was the chief centre of Hinduism in Srinagar in the fourteenth century of Christian Era. Raja Purwarsain, it is said, had deplinished his treasury in building this monumental work. Though Islam had found its way to Kashmir half a century before the arrival of Sayyid Shah-Hamdan, (may God be pleased with him) yet neither had it reached the common people nor were its principles and precepts known to those few who had embraced the new faith and who mainly consisted of the ruling class and the courtiers.

Shahmiri dynasty ruled over the land. Shihabuddin had ascended the throne of his forefathers who had obtained it by dint of their efficiency and ability in those troubled times which followed the death of Sultan Sad-rul-din the Budhist king Reinchan and the first convert to Islam at the hands of the Saint Sayyid Abdur-Rahman surnamed Bul-Bul Shah Sahib.

The Ruler and some of his courtiers, no doubt, professed Islam, but virtually knew very little of the fundamental principles of the faith of their choice. Sayyid Abdur-Rahman was a Majzub (ecstatic renunciator of the world) who was generally in his ecstacies or

absorbed in meditation. The Hindu Sadhoo Shahpur who was in-charge of the temple weilded a great influence over the people at large and thus hindered the spread of the new light for a short while. The Sacredotal class of the Hindus strengthened his hands and trying times and circumstances demanded a learned and spiritually-advanced preacher who would be able to forestall his activities and give the commonalty light and learning of Islam. This gap was filled by the appearance of Sayyid Shahi Hamdan — Amir Kabeer Mir Sayyid Alialhamadani (may God sanctify his soul) at the scene:

Mir Sayyid Ali hence-forward called Shah Hamadan the son of Sayyid Shihabud-din was born at Hamadan in 714 A. H. The place of his birth was the centre of Muslim learning and culture. Heredity, environment and proper nutrition which are essential for a proper and sound education were all present in his house-hold and it is no wonder when he reached his majority, he turned out to be a great scholar, at an early age. He acquired the education prevalent, then, in Hamadan, and in the very prime of his youth, was well versed in scriptural lore, Phylosophy, Logic and Metaphysics. For a Sayyid of his standing this was not sufficient and side by side he made great advancement in spiritual foresight and purification under the able guidance of preceptors, at home and abroad and became a perfect saint and mystic. His reputation spread throughout the length and breadth of the Islamic world.

Timor's occupation of Samarkand and Hamadan was a challenge to all those who asserted to be descendants of the Prophet (may peace be on him),

as owing to the influence they weilded over the world of Islam and the respect and esteem in which they were held by high and low, rich and poor alike, he considerd them to be thorns in his rose-bed. He demanded stringent proofs from such claimants and put them to extraordinary hard tests, thus annihilating a great many of such people. Such an undue and inadvisible course of action compelled many a one to migrate to other places while some gave strong proofs in favour of their assertions and stood the severe tests. Sayyid Shah Hamadan (may God be pleased with him) was one of those who by dint of moral virtues, spiritual superiority and truth of his assertion stood the test well and overcame his opponent and then with some of his friends, disciples and relations bade adieu to his home-land, as a protest against the ill-devised tests and indiscriminate tortures to which Sayyids in general had been subjected by the rough and unruly Tartars. These self exiles turned their faces towards Kashmir which, then, as now, owing to its physical features, was the heaven of safety, immune from all outside incursions and invasions.

Thus Sayyid Shah Hamadan (may God be pleased with him) reached this happy valley and Srinagar about 774 A. H. for the first time. As already related in the introduction, Islam, though, it had found a way to Kashmir, the sun of reality had not yet illumined the whole of Kashmir, and the influence of the Hindu sacredotal class was extra-ordinarily very great. Shahpore the Keeper of the temple was not an ordinary priest but a perfect yogi of good calibre, well versed in Vedic lore and spiritually advanced. As such any preacher of Islam had first of all to turn his attention to such

a great man and naturally Sayyid Shah Hamdan (may God be pleased with him) also, came to measure strength with him. Sayyid Shah Hamadan (may God be pleased with him) proved more than a match for his adversary in debate and by dint of his spiritual superiority, Divine aid and educational accomplishments overcame him; Shahpore fully realized the worth of his opponent and without any hesitation embraced Islam at the hands of Sayyid Shah Hamadan (may God be pleased with him). This was a signal to those who desired to give up their old faith, because they were tired of the rituals with which the Hindu priestly class had encumbered Hinduism, and adopt Islam as their new creed. Thousands of men and women followed suit and tearing their holy threads piled them up in the compound and set them on fire. In this way the same temple, for the time being, was converted into a mosque. After some time the stones of the temple were utilized in constructing a platform where these new adherents to Islam offered their five times prayers along with their preceptor Sayyid Shah Hamadan (may God be pleased with him). It is admitted by all chronologists and Muslim saints that Sayyid Shah Hamadan (may God be pleased with him) received inspiration from the holy Prophet (may peace be on him) as to the erection of a mosque at the very spot which from times immemorial had been a place of worship and about which Kalihana in his Rajtarungni admits that it was a sacred place always, but he could not assign it to any particular creed. The Prophet, (may peace be on him) as explained in the introduction, laid the foundations of the present Khan Qahi Moalla, as described by Sayyid Shah Hamadan (may God be pleased with him) in various of his writings and referred to by Mir Mohd. Hamdani in the Waqf Nama. The superstructure is

the work of later days which underwent many changes as times passed by. Sayyid Shah Hamadan (may God be pleased with him) left after the erection of the Platform. He renewed his visit in 781 A. H. or 1378 A. D. and came to Kashmir for the 3rd and the last time in 785 A. H. or 1383 A. D. in order to strengthen the foundations of both the creed he had established and the place of worship he had founded, in the reign of Qutbuddin, son of Shihabuddin.

The worthy son of Sayyid Shah Hamadan (may God be pleased with him) Mir Mohammad, by name, under the instructions of his father came to Kashmir in 796 A. H. or 1394 A. D. with a group of three hundred Sayyids during the reign of Sultan-Sikandar son of Qutbuddin. His Minister, Seh Butt, was a staunch and orthodox Hindu and a Kashmiri Pandit. Though he had seen manv saints and scholars of Islam before, yet he had stuck to his religion unmolested but when he saw Mir Mohammad, he at once embraced Islam saying "so far I used to smell Islam, but now I see the bright face of this Divine faith which enlightened my mind and why should not I embrace it".

A true Muslim always thinks it his foremost duty to propagate Islam wherever he be, because he thinks it the way to Salvation for humanity. Seh Butt who had become a perfect zealot under the high sounding name of Malik Saifud-din was foremost in spreading Islam among his community and thus benefitting them of the bliss of Divine pleasure. As Muslims gave liberty, equality and fraternity to all human beings, side by side with the message of God, they thought it the betterment and

welfare of mankind and a service to them to promulgate the simple but Divine and inspiring principles of Islam amongst those with whom they came into contact. The 300 Sayyids along with those scholars and saints whom Sayyid Shah Hamadan (may God be pleased with him) left here formed a considerable body of ardent preachers who reached every nook and corner of the country and with their piety, argument and spiritual supremacy did tremendous work in inducing the people towards Islam.

Their followers, the newly converted people of their own accord converted the temples into mosques, in consequence of the change of their faith. No doubt, Sultan Sikander patronized them by granting jagirs stipends and pensions. The common but wrong belief that Sultan Sikander forced people to change their faith is a mere adulteration and obliteration of historical data. He only encouraged the preachers without teasing or troubling the people for the sake of their ancestral creed which is quite contrary to the teachings of Islam.

Mir Mohammad Hamadani for the first time constructed the mosque of Sayyid Shah Hamadan in 798 A. H. The king granted big donations for it's construction and virtually it was built on the former's own expence. The Platform erected by his holy Father under the instructions of the Prophet (may peace be on him) formed the basis of the new building. Though the main foundation cf the building remained unaltered up to this time, the building or the superstructure had to undergo reconstruction many a time, during

the last 560 years.

Eighty-seven years after its construction, the roof of the mosque caught fire in 885 A. H. the sincere ingenuity of the keepers saved the relics and the lower portion of the mosque. It was reconstructed with the help of the then ruler. Bibi Saleh, the queen, who was the daughter of Kaji Chak was determined to reconstruct the mosque. It is said that she disposed of her ornaments and jewels to meet the expenses of the new construction which owing to purposeful negligence had been delayed. The courage and zeal which the queen exhibited at such a critical moment was responsible to get the second storey added to it.

The mosque had to be reconstructed on the same foundation and the lower storey in the year 1146 A. H. owing to its roof and the upper portion catching fire at about 10 A. M. in broad day light. Where the fire came from could not be traced out. Nawab Abul Barakat Khan, the Moghal Viceroy undertook this time the work of reconstruction. The present building with small alterations and additions in the upper portion is the same construction and has the same foundation as laid down by Sayyid Shah Hamadan (may God be pleased with him) under the inspirational instructions of the Prophet (may peace be on him). The small rooms in the northern and southern side-walls inside and the four tall and gigantic central pillars which support the ceiling are the holy relics of the construction undertaken by Mir Mohammad Hamadani, who whenever he constructed a mosque, attached such small rooms to them for the prayers, devotion and medita-

tion of his holy friends, as in those early times, they had no residential houses for them and the mosques as such were residential for them. Such small rooms can be seen in Khanqahi Tral built by him which stands in its original condition to this day and has undergone no change. The topmost room in the northern wall constructed in presence of Sayyid Shah Hamadan is called Hujra Khas or the chief chamber. Here Sayyid Shah Hamadan (may God be pleased with him) used to receive enlightenment and divine inspiration and here he used to busy himself in prayers and devotions. It is the oldest and is reserved as sacred. Just outside it in a tall Almirah are two Banners, a description of which will be found at the end of this small Pamphlet. They too are held sacred.

Khazar Khan an Afghan Nazim (Viceroy) got the Arabic scriptural inscriptions embossed on the 4 walls in later days. The attractiveness and magnetic charm of the inscriptions is unprecedented in Islamic Architecture. The great part of these inscriptions consists of that worthy collection which is called "*Awradi-Fathiah*"—a superb and extreme confirmation of the *Islamic conception of the Unity of God.* The compilation of Hazrat Shiekh Sayyid Abdul Kadir Jhelani (may God be pleased with him) called "*Kibriyat-i-Ahmar*" in praise of the Prophet (may peace be on him) also is written on part of the four walls. Some verses of Quran form the remaining portion of these inscriptions.

Minor repairs in the mosque were effected in 1218, 1243, 1302, & 1324 - A. H. In 1218 an Afghan Viceroy Sardar Abdullah Khan got the roof repaired. He raised funds and contributed to it munificently

from his private purse as well as from the State Treasury. In 1243, the Muslims raised subscriptions for its repairs and in 1302, Nawab Ahsanullah Khan of Dacca aided the repairs with a big donation. All these repairs were made owing to the damages caused by earth-quakes in the building. In 1324, Mufti Abdur Rahim, who had become an ascetic, notwithstanding his great opulence, undertook to repair the mosque and his magnanimous efforts were supported by one Kashmiri merchant - Ghulami Samadani, then residing at Peshawar. Many other additions and alterations were made in the structure of the mosque from time to time. The walls were washed anew in different paints. Very recently a floor of the polished stones was laid down. These repairs are executed from the funds which are raised from the public and the rent of the shops and houses belonging to the sanctuary which are called to be Waqf.

WAQF — This account would remain incomplete if silence is observed about the Waqf. In 798 A. H. when Mir Mohammad Hamadani began the construction of the mosque, Sultan Sikandar allotted the revenue of three villages, Wachi, Nunwani & Tral, to meet the daily expenses of the mosque and the Langer (Inn - Free hotel) attached to it. In return for these 3 villages, the area which formed the compound of the mosque and the area upon which the mosque is built, Mir Mohammad Hamadani bestowed upon him a Badakhshani jewel. The last two pieces of land were purchased from the different owners and neighbours of the mosque. The mandate laid down by Sultan Sikandar runs thus :—

"Therefore, I, the humble servant of the exalted Sayyids and great saints, Sikandar Shah by name, in lieu of a jewel which the worthy Saint Mir Sayyid Mohammad son of Sayyid Ali-al-Hamadani (may God be pleased with him) bestowed upon me as a sacred relic, allot three villages of Kashmir i. e. Wachi from Pargana Shahpore, Nunwani from Paragana Martand & Tral from Paragana Uller together with the pieces of land upon which the Khan-qahi-Mualla has been constructed and its suburbs, purchasing them from the owners thereof, for the prayers and meditation of the virtuous servants of God and hereby reserve these villages for the expenses of Khan-qahi-Mualla of the great Sayyid, the chosen of the people of enlightenment, the descendant of the holy Prophet (may peace be on him), the source of knowledge and inspiration and the founder of Islam (in Kashmir), Hazrat Amir Kabir Mir Sayyid Ali-al-Hamadani (may God be pleased with him) and hereby pronounce 3 villages aforesaid and the pieces of land mentioned above as property of the Shrine for the common convenience and use of all high and low".

The document of Waqf which Mir Mohammad Hamadani drew up at that very moment for the 3 villages and the pieces of land upon which the mosque was built and the compound thereof which he purchased from Sikandar Shah, in return for the Badakhshani jewel, mentioned in the aforesaid mandate of the latter, confirms the same fact besides laying down

the terms under which the income was to be disposed of. This document is sufficient to show clearly the unselfish zeal and sincerity of the then Islamic leaders and missionaries. It runs as under :—

"In accordance with the great desire and repeated requests of the Exalted Sultan (Sikandar Shah) we built a mosque on the Plat-form which my father of venerable memory had erected under the inspirational instructions of our great ancestor the Holy Prophet (may peace be on him), and with a special mandate allotted, the villages of Wachi, Nunwani and Tral from the Shoura, Martand and Uller Parganas as Waqf, so that the keepers of the Hazrat Khan-qahi-Mualla and the disciples passing their time in devotion therein might remain secure and immune from seeking the necessaries of life. I appoint my wise and great brother Maulana Mohammad Said as the superintendent of this mosque and the belongings thereof so that he might look to the comfort and convenience of strangers, the inmates of the sanctuary who might be busy with the work of reform and devotion, and that medicants, devotees, piousmen, sincere believers and seekers after enlightenment might receive a share from the fruits of this commendable fruitful tree and the inmates of this mosque may aspire to the heights of "I have a conference with God." Maulana Said should be a servant

of the great and elderly; obedient to the pious; a brother to youngsters and a father to orphans. He should also supervise, watch and assist in the collection of the revenue of the aforesaid villages. If God forbid, an inmate devotee happens to commit a fault, he should pardon him once or twice and if he persists on it a third time, he should be warned and rebuked and if the persistence is stubborn he should punish him with expulsion from the Khan-qahi-Mualla. He should clothe the naked and satiate the hunger of the hungry and the starving people".

It seems that the management was carried on in strict obedience to the directions given, for about a century, when there seems to have crept in, some laxity of governance, as in 885 A. H. Sultan Hassan Shah, the great grandson of Sultan Sikandar had to purchase the surrounding land again which shows that it had been usurped by the people. And again Saleh-Bibi, the queen of Sultan Mohammad Shah, had to purchase the suburbs and write a Waqfnama in 887 A. H. which she got signed by her husband, and, officially, attested and confirmed. This Waqfnama was delivered to Sayyid Mohammad, the Superintendent. This Waqfnama can be said to have been a precautionary measure against the high-handedness of the Chaks & to forestall their activities against the Khan-qahi-Mualla or a revival of the old Waqfnama which might have lost its significance.

In 971 A. H. the Chak ruler Hussain Shah intended to confiscate the Jagir of Khan-qahi-Mualla, but a threatening letter from Akbar the Great restrained him from doing so. Emperor Aurangzeb reduced the Jagir to one half of the original in consequence of a report from the then viceroy Nawab Saif Khan who had been delegated with powers to investigate into the misgovernance of the Waqf. He decided, as a sequel of his enquiries, that the payments should be made direct from the State Exchequer, in cash. During the Afghan Rule also a sum of Rs. 2,000/- a year was sanctioned for the maintenance of the sanctuary. This continued to the advent of the Sikhs who confiscated it in toto. The Sikhs even went so far as to endeavour to blow up this monumental Islamic Centre, but owing to the intervention of the influential personages they could not perpetrate such a heinous deed. In the reign of the late H. H. the Maharaja Ranbir Singh Qazi Yakub, Yarkand Ambassador in order to prove his descent from Shah Hamadan and thus avail himself of the benefit of these Jagirs succeeded in taking from Khan-qahi-Mualla, copies of all the valueable and trustworthy documents for presenting them to the Viceroy of India and got a pension of Rs 12 000/- per annum. He was the Agent appointed between the Yarkand Government and the British Government for negotiating some important Political terms, on this basis, also.

What out of all the possession which were at the disposal of this great sanctuary remains and is existing now, is but insignificant and yet inspite of all these vicissitudes, this great mosque stands upon

its own legs, so far as expenses on ordinary repairs are concerned and when some great expenses in connection with big repairs are to be defrayed, the devotion and literality of the Muslims proves unrivalled.

HOLY RELICS: Sayyid Shah Hamadan (may God be pleased with him) left behind him some other important relics which are held very sacred by all the Muslims and there is concensus of opinion about their authenticity. The numerous *books* he composed from the best of the Sofi Literature, some of which have been printed and published, but most of them, in manuscript, remain as sacred possessions of the old respectable family libraries and most of them have been eaten up by worms. *An everlasting relic of Sayyid Shah Hamadan is the Awaradi Fathiyah in Arabic giving a short concise and precise conception of the Unity of God and His attributes. It also provides* a *comprehensive idea of the basic fundamental principles of Islam.* The sanctuary presents that grandeur of Islam which it had when Sayyid Shah Hamadan (may God be pleased with him) visited Kashmir and propagated Islam, every morning, when the contents of the same pamphlet are recited by the believers loudly, in one voice. It was Shah Hamadan who proposed & instructed the Muslims to recite it loudly under the inspirational instructions from the holy Prophet (be peace on him).

The mosque has an indescribable magnetic attraction for all beholders and visitors in general and Muslims in particular and the great authors and poets like Syed Noor Din Jaffar Badakhshi (2) Sheikh Qewamuddin Badakhshi (3) Sheikh Yakub Sarfi (4) Mirza

Akmaluddin Behkhan Badakhshi (5) Khawja Habibullah Nowshehri (6) Sheikh Abdul Wahab Noori (may God be pleased with all of them) (7) Muhsin Fani and many others have greatly eulogised and admired the sanctuary both in verse and prose and have gone so far as to call it the Kaaba of Kashmir.

The Moghal Emperors also paid great homage to this sanctuary which is quite evident from a Qasida of Muhsini Fani, wherein the poet describes how the Moghul Emperor sent robes of honour for either the Standard of the Prophet or the Tent-Pole.

Even the philosopher, poet of modern times the late Dr. Sh. Mohammad-Iqbal pays his obeisance to Sayyid Shah Hamadan (may God be pleased with him) in Javid Nama, the literal translation of those veises is as under.†

(1) "The leader of Sayyids and the guide for Ajum, whose hand carved the destiny of nations".

(2) "So far as Algazali learned the lesson of Alah-hoo (the lesson of enlightenment) he received inspiration and knowledge from his (Shah Hamadans) house and ancestors. Herein the poet refers to the fact that Algazali's inspirations enlightenment and wide knowledge were due to the ancestors of Sayyid Shah Hamadan (may God be pleased with him).

(3) He is the preceptor of that paradise-like country (Kashmir). He is the champion, the devotee and a guide to Kings. Herein Dr. Iqbal refers to the monumental work written by Sayyid Shah Hamadan (may

God be pleased with him) which was an advice to Sultan Qutbuddin guiding him in the art of Governmemt & science of administration. The book is named Zakhiratul Maluk, "The Treasure of the Kings".

(4) That ocean sleeved king (as generous and deep as the ocean so far as knowledge and enlightenment are concerned) gave to the country of Kashmir knowledge, art, civilization and religion.

(5) That great man created with miraculous & marvellous skill a smaller Iran i. e. Kashmir.

In conclusion I beg of my readers to excuse me for any short-comings in the composition of this pamphlet or any detail thereof. The whole material has been selected from the authentic sources so far as was possible. "To err is human to forgive divine".

† سید السادات سالار عجم - دست او معمار تقدیر امم
تا غزالی درس اللہ ھو گرفت - ذکر و فکر و از دودمان او گرفت
مرشد آں کشور مینو نظیر - مرد درویش و سلاطین را مشیر
خطہ را آں شاہ دریا آستین - داد علم و صنعت و تہذیب و دین
آفرید ان مرد ایران صغیر - با هنر ھائے عجیب و دلپذیر

POLITICAL IMPORTANCE

Besides, being a source of religious, spiritual and divine inspiration, this Historical place has throughout remained a centre of political activities too. Even as late as in twenties when the Muslims, forming the bulk of population, were ignored in almost all the Governmental spheres ; for the first time a big demonstration of Black Flags shouting the slogans of 'Bidad-Bidad (Justice-Justice) was held here when the late Maharaja Partap Singh accompanied by the British Viceroy were moving in a river procession towards the Vier in river Jehlum. A memorandum containing the grievances of the Muslims was also managed to be presented to the Viceroy by the attendants (Keepers) of this shrine under the leadership of Master Ghulam Ahmed Zuhra (Hamadani).

The late Munshi Siraj-ud-Din an important employee of the British Resident's Office here and Kh. Noor Shah Naquashbandi- a Jagirder and many others being behind the scene ; a deputation of Khudams (The Keepers) of this holy shrine went to Simla and again presented a memorandum of the Muslim grievances to the British Viceroy. This did bring its fruit later on and the late Maharaja was asked by the Political Department to look into these genuine grievances of meagre representation of Muslims in the State Services etc. Although a humble beginning yet it goes to the credit of those who managed it at a time when such representations were equivalent to treason.

One Molvi Abdul Kadeer a resident of British India, who was later tried for sedition in Central Jail Srinagar which resulted in the first public and arbitrary shooting killing over a score of Muslims for having gone there to watch the proceedings, had also delivered his speech in this very compound. This incident has gone down in the recent history of Kashmir as the corner stone of the Freedom Struggle.

Later in thirtees when after centuries of subjugation and servitude there was political upheaval and a mass movement was launched by (Sheri-Kashmir) Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah for emancipation from the Autocratic rule. It was here in this very compound that the Muslims chose their seven representatives for placing their grievances before the Late Maharaja Hari Singh

Again in the year 1933-34 when the Working Committee of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference under Sheikh Abdullah's leadership decided to launch a movement for responsible Government ; the people over here under the guidance of a veteran and shrewd politician Moulana Mohd. Syeed Masoodi launched a civil disobedience movement from here as Sheikh was away in Punjab. During this movement the speakers were publicly flogged in police Thanas by the habitual convicts under the Magisterial orders under the Burmese Ordinance of 19-L. There is a huge bell hanging on the upper storey for mass prayers and whenever it is rung at odd hours, thousands of people would assemble to enquire the cause. The authorities tried their utmost to remove it but did

not succeed as it is always kept under lock. The Attendants of the holy shrine were summoned by the then Governor Sardar Attar Singh and asked to stop the people assembling here for carrying on agitation but they did not oblige him saying that being a public place, they cannot do it. On this their leaders were whisked away to Jail for some time (including Master Zohra) and others had to leave Kashmir.

In this movement the late Moulana Mirwaiz Ahmadullah Hamadani, the chief priest attached to this shrine, while wearing a shroud before thousands of people who had come to hear him, offered himself for arrest. Later he was exiled from the State and on return he fell a victim to facial paralysis which proved the immediate cause of his death. He was given a befitting burial with all the religious pomp and thousands of devoted mourners participated in his Jeenaza prayers. He too is laid in rest here in the annexed Graveyard. His death anniversary is commemorated every year by recitations from the holy Quran.

On one occasion while the people were leaving the premises after the public speech, some miscreants hurled stones on the police, the honorary Magistrate with armed constabulary entered the holy premises and for the first time ordered shooting inside killing two youngmen and one pregnant woman in the compound and even injured the holy western wall of the shrine. The bullet wounds are still there and were seen even by the late Jawahir Lal Nehru and the late Aasif Ali when they had come to defend Sheikh Mohammad

Abdullah as lawyers when he was being tried for sedition for launching the Quit-Kashmir movement.

This dastardly action of the Government injured the religious sentiments of Muslims. There was complete Hartal for three days and sign-boards were kept on all the enterances prohibiting the uniformed or armed police from entering inside the holy premises. Muslims had often to forego their mass congregation in this holy shrine either due to curfew or heavy armed guards on all the routes leading to this shrine.

In 1947 it was again here that Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah after having been honourably released from the Prison in a historical mammoth gathering gave a clarion call to the youth to come forward in thousands to defend the State and to maintain communal hormony. This was the time when the entire Indian Sub-Continent was passing through a human blood-bath due to communal frenzy. The ruler of the State, the late Maharaja Hari Singh had already fled away during the night and the entire Government machinary had collapsed. Only within a weeks time ten to fifteen thousand volunteers men and women came forward and the command of these unarmed volunteers was incidentally given to one of the Standard Bearers of this holy shrine, G. M. Hamdani. These volunteers while working round the clock under very trying circumstances of severe cold and darkness did their job so well that not even a single communal incident was reported from any part of the valley. This is history.

In memory of the Martyrs and sufferers of the Freedom-Struggle in the State of Jammu & Kashmir, a big Public Platform has been constructed in the central compound of this Historical Holy Shrine which is even now being used for both religious and political mass meetings.

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INTIZAMIA (Managing Committee)

Information contained herein will be incomplete unless a mention is made to the present Intizamia (Managing) Committee of Awqaf-i-Khanquah-i-Moualla. It was towards the end of twenties that one man trusteeship in the name of Mutwalihood to look after the interests and management of the holy shrine was done away with. A democratic system with the association of the Khudams (The Keepers) was ushered in to look after the possessions and financial affairs of this historical religious institution. A constitution was drafted and adopted laying down the duties of all the office bearers, management and supervision of all the belongings of the holy shrine etc. Zuhra Brothers (The Standard Bearers of the Holy Shrine) played an important and effective role in managing this transfer.

Kh. Ali Shah Buch Ex-Governor and a scholarly devotee of this spiritual centre was elected as its first President who continues even at present. The President, besides eleven members from Khudams (The Keepers) nominates about thirty devoted members from the public consisting of Religious heads, Educationists and Businessmen from whom the office-bearers are elected. The committee Store-Keeper known as Tehwildar maintains a register of all the movables and immovables of the shrine. The cash is kept in the Jammu and Kashmir Bank Limited. The money under constitution is drawn only under the signatures of the President.

Being service of love and devction all the members and office-bearers of the Managing Committee are working honourarily.

Here are a few achievements on the back of the present Intizamia Committee. In 1943-44 the huge upper Minaret and all the five big roofs of Timber and mud previously, were in a dilapidated condition and there was apprehension of the rain water ozzing inside the magnificient building which would have certainly caused havoc if not repaired in time. The President made an appeal for funds and while moving personally with some of his member colleagues collected more than a lac of rupee within a very short period. The upper Minaret was built anew after the existing patron and all the roofs were replaced by the Galvanized Tin Sheets instead of clay. Besides this all the outer muddy walls of the huge mosque and the surrounding platforms, roads and attached graveyard were covered with the Devri-Stone. At this occasion a mass meeting of thousands of the devotees was convened and the foundation-Stone was laid by the late Faqir Merak Shah Sahib Kashani. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah addressing the huge audience referred to this Holy Shrine as the undisputed Islamic Centre in the State and appealed for donations to make the premises more spacious to accommodate the increasing number of piligrims every year—on the anniversary of the great Saint (May God be pleased with him).

Towards the West two spacious electrified beautiful parks on the bank of river Jehlum in con-

crete cement and lime with Iron fencings were constructed. The triangular shaped Ghat leading to river with a number of Stair-Cases was all made of Devri-Stone. The Minaret and the roof of the annexed Sheikh Baba Ali Wali (May Allah's Blessings be on him) which were giving way, were also built anew. The whole massive structure of the main building of this historical mosque being of wood; precautions have been taken to avoid any fire due to electrical current. The entire wiring has been done in fire-proof rubber tubes. Permanent electrification on ceremonial occasions has also been provided. Loud Speakers for mass prayers and for recitations from the holy Quran have also been fixed permanently. Ten deluxe big ceiling fans have also been permanently fixed in the huge Central Hall to be used during the summer months. The Stone bed of Hamam (The warm Mosque during winter) was replaced and an electric Well-Pump fixed to avoid any water scarcity to maintain more than two dozen water tapes at a time. A pukka building on modern lines was built in the nearby with five shops and ten rooms which gives a good revenue to the shrine. Possession of a few Shops at the Lal Chowk belonging to the Shrine was taken over from the Municipality. A small little library has been maintained at the Central Office in this very compound having a valuable number of books.. The main Eastern gate known as Babul Islam has been constructed a new after hundreds of years for making it more spacious to avoid inconvenience to thousands of Piligrims during the ceremonial congregations. One more five storeyed building on modern style has been constructed in front of Babul Islam to help in increasing the

revenues for the Holy Shrine.

God willing, we are also intending to open a Quranic learning centre where the Holy Quran will be taught with its translation.

Lastly, many more important repairs and constructions including a Hamadan Boulevard on the Northern riverside right upto Zainakadal (the bridge in sight on the right) with departmental assistance are before the Committee. This needs a good amount of money and it is therefore expected of every devotee and visitor to subscribe more and more to add to the beauty of this historical source of divine and spiritual inspiration.

A P P E A L

In view of the fact that the entire maintenance and repairs of this majestic Historical holy mosque are carried on only through a meagre source of its revenues from a few rental shops and houses ; the main source are the funds raised occasionally from the devotees and the donations offered by the people. For this purpose the Managing Committee has fixed a locked Iron-Safe on the main Eastern entrance to the holy shrine and all the visitors and devotees are requested to donate liberally only in the said safe.

Lastly I will be failing in my duty if I will not thank all those who have helped me in giving a final shape to this small little pamphlet of a great historical, religious, spiritual cum-political place in the whole of the Indian Sub-Continent.

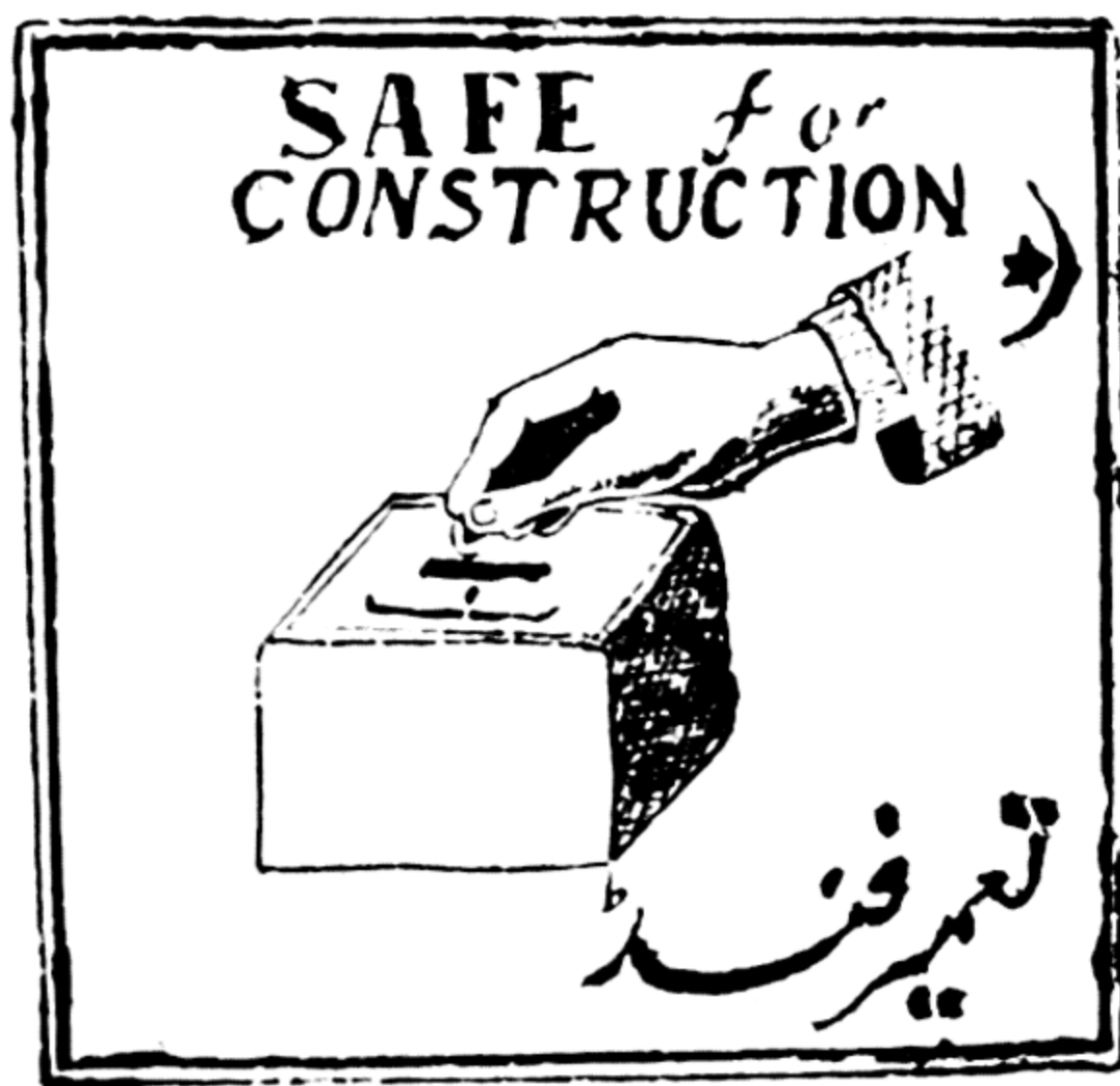
Master Ghulam Ahmed Zohra
On behalf of
YOUNG KHUDAMS OF
KHANQUAHI MOUALLA,
SRINAGAR.

SHAH-HAMDAN MOSQUE

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR.

Known as

Khanqahi-Mualla, Srinagar-2.

Visitors are requested to drop the donations only in the Locked "Iron Safe" kept at the main entrance for the maintenance of the holy Shrine of Shah-i-Hamdan.

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